

SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA CONSERVANCY



DRAFT INTERIM STRATEGIC PLAN

December 2, 2010

December 15, 2010

To accomplish great things, we
must not only act, but also
dream; not only plan, but also
believe.

ANATOLE FRANCE

A hundred years after we are
gone and forgotten, those who
never heard of us will be living
with the results of our actions.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

A common mistake people make
when trying to design something
foolproof is to underestimate the
ingenuity of complete fools.

DOUGLAS ADAMS

Inaugural 2010-2011

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Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.

EDWARD T. McMAHON

The best way to predict the future is to invent it.

IMMANUEL KANT

Executive Summary

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (SSJDC or Conservancy) is a state agency within the Natural Resources Agency and was established through legislation on February 3, 2010.

The Conservancy is a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta in collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties. In addition, the Conservancy is to support efforts that advance both environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents in a complementary manner. These are the co-equal responsibilities of the Conservancy.

The Conservancy also has a broad array of other charges ranging from protecting and preserving Delta agriculture and working landscapes to assisting the Delta regional economy through the operation of the conservancy's programs.

The Conservancy has statewide significance because it is integral to achieving the state's co-equal goals of ecosystem restoration and water supply reliability. The SSJDC is charged with a broad mission that will be accomplished through collaboration and cooperation with various partners.

The Delta Conservancy Board is required by statute to complete and adopt a strategic plan within two years after hiring its executive officer (Public Resources Code Section 32376). The strategic plan will guide the vision, mission, and objectives of the Conservancy over the next three to five years.

Under Section 32376, the strategic plan will be developed in cooperation with various stakeholders through an open, public process. The plan will be designed to address the Conservancy's role and proposed actions regarding land use, recreation, water and flood management, and habitat conservation and protection within the legal Delta.

The strategic plan shall also establish priorities and criteria for projects and programs, based upon an assessment of program requirements, resources, and funding needs throughout the Delta. Finally, the statute requires that the Conservancy's strategic plan be consistent with the Delta Plan, the Delta Protection Commission's Resource Management Plan, the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977, and the Habitat Management, Preservation, and Restoration Plan for the Suisun Marsh (Public Resources Code Sec. 32376). Two of these plans—the Delta Plan and the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan—are not yet completed.

Because two of the plans with which the Conservancy's strategic plan must be consistent are not completed, the Conservancy is developing a draft interim strategic plan to

guide Conservancy operations through 2014. The plan outlines the vision, mission, and guiding principles of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, and develops the foundation for the programs and activities to achieve its vision and mission. Program areas are defined by law (Public Resources Code 32322).

Key information presented in this draft of the interim strategic plan includes:

- An agency vision describing the desired outcome of the Conservancy's efforts
- A mission statement that reflects the charge given to the Conservancy by the State Legislature and the Governor as defined in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act (SBX7-1)
- A set of guiding principles that establish the basis for how the Conservancy will provide its services and relate to its stakeholders

~~Further versions of this draft interim strategic plan may include refined:~~

- Assessment of the external and internal conditions that affect how the Conservancy can carry out its programs. In this context, external conditions are things over which the Conservancy has input, but little control, such as state regulations, other programs, or the budget process. Internal conditions are things over which the Conservancy has input and control, such as how to spend the money, staffing, program priorities, etc.
- Series of organizational strategies and goals that describe the steps necessary to create a successful organization
- Set of programmatic goals and actions to create a sound foundation for the Conservancy's work
- Glossary of terms used in this document

This draft was created by Conservancy staff at the direction of the Strategic Plan subcommittee. Staff anticipates that future versions of this draft interim strategic plan will be created through an open and transparent process that includes full Board participation and public workshops. The final version of the strategic plan must be adopted by the Board no later than 2013 **[note: the 2013 date is if the executive officer is hired in 2011; Public Resources Code Section 32376]**.

The Conservancy may modify the Plan as needed to adapt to new information, changed circumstances, or unanticipated events. Any Plan modifications will be made through the Board's open, public process. The plan will be reviewed periodically to determine progress, and will be revised at least every five years **[note: is this what the subcommit-**

tee sees as the plan schedule?]

A copy of this plan and other related information can be found at the Conservancy's website: <http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov>. CD or printed copies may also be requested by contacting the Conservancy at (916) 375-2084. Hard copies are also located at our headquarter office at 3500 Industrial Blvd., West Sacramento.

Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.

EDWARD T. McMAHON

The best way to predict the future is to invent it.

IMMANUEL KANT

About the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

Vision

As a primary state agency to implement Delta ecosystem restoration and support efforts that advance environmental protection and economic well-being of Delta residents, our vision is:

Option 1: The Conservancy acts with others to preserve, protect and restore the resources of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh. It will serve as an example of economy and environment in harmony. Our vision is of a rich, diverse, restored, and accessible Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh.

Option 2: The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy's vision for the future is:

The unique and significant Delta and Suisun Marsh enjoy outstanding environmental, economic, and social health with vibrant communities and landscapes sustained for future generations.

Vision: an inspiring picture of what the organization would like to become beyond today. It is not bound by time, represents continuing purposes, and serves as a foundation for a system of strategic planning. It is intended to provide purpose into the Conservancy's activities, demonstrate long-term direction, and depict a strong identity of who we are. *Vision is the effect.*

- "What will success look like?"
- Realist and credible
- Well articulated and easy to understand
- Ambitious

Features:

- Rich and diverse natural, physical, and living resources are protected and conserved.
- Healthy, diverse, and economically sustainable Delta communities thrive, prepared for and protected from natural disasters.
- Californians value and invest in healthy watersheds that provide the Delta with high quality water, spectacular scenery, and important wildlife habitat.
- Sustainable working landscapes provide environmental, economic, and social benefits to the Delta.
- The Delta's cultural, archeological, and historical resources are preserved, visited, and treasured.

- Healthy and sustainable tourism, recreation, and commercial activities are valued and encouraged.

Mission Statement

Option 1: The Conservancy will partner with others to

- protect,
- preserve, and
- enhance the
 - Delta environment,
 - heritage,
 - property,
 - regional economy,
 - agriculture and working landscapes, and
 - increase opportunities for tourism

for the benefit of the Delta region, its communities, and the citizens of California.

Mission: A mission statement is a written declaration of the Conservancy's purpose and focus that clearly states who is being served and how. It succinctly identifies what the organization does, why, and for whom it does it. *Mission is the cause.*

- "Who are we?"
- "Why are we here?"
- "Who do we serve?"

Option 2: Language from the Budget. At December 2, 2010, subcommittee meeting, group agreed not to use this option. ~~The mission of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy is to support efforts that advance both environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents in a complementary manner. The Conservancy's activities include the following: protecting and enhancing habitat and habitat restoration; protecting and preserving Delta agriculture and working landscapes; providing increased opportunities for tourism and recreation; promoting Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta; increasing the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes; protecting and improving water quality; assisting the Delta regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's program; identifying priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed; conducting activities to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources; assisting local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans; facilitating protection and safe harbor agreements under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the California Endangered Species Act for adjacent land owners and local public agencies; and promoting environmental education. The Conservancy will act as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta and to support efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of the Delta residents.~~

Description

The SSJDC is a state agency within the Natural Resources Agency. The Conservancy's service area is the statutory Delta and Suisun Marsh, approximately 1,300 square miles and more than 1,000 miles of levees and waterways. The Conservancy's service area is home to the largest estuary on the west coast of the Americas; is home to more than 750 species of plants and wildlife as well as 55 species of fish, and provides habitat to migratory waterfowl as part of the Pacific Flyway; and contains more than 500,000 acres of agricultural land with unique soils.

In this draft interim strategic plan, the term "Delta" refers to both the legally defined delta ~~[Statute reference]~~ and the Suisun Marsh ~~(Water Code Section 12220)~~.

The Delta provides numerous opportunities for recreation, such as boating, kayaking, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and hunting. The navigable waterways of the Delta are available for public access and make up the majority of current recreational activities.

There is a rich natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage in the Delta. It is home to the community of Locke, the only town in the United States built by early Chinese immigrants. Other legacy communities include Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland, Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Knightsen, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove.

California depends on the Delta as a significant source of food and water; the Delta supports a \$4 billion economy and is traversed by energy, communications, and transportation facilities vital to the economic health of the state. As important as it is to the state, the Delta has also been described as one of the most environ-

What is a Conservancy?

There are 11 conservancies established by California statute. There is no overarching definition of "conservancy" in statute, rather, each conservancy is defined in and of itself in its respective enabling legislation. For this draft interim strategic plan, conservancy is defined as:

1. A body concerned with the preservation of nature, specific species, or natural resources: *the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy*.
2. The conservation of something, especially wildlife and the environment, in particular:
 - preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife;
 - preservation, repair, and prevention of deterioration of archaeological, historical, and cultural sites and artifacts; and
 - prevention of excessive or wasteful use of a resource.

mentally fragile areas of the United States.

The Conservancy's service area covers part of six counties, most of which fall into five counties often collectively called the Delta Counties. The Delta Counties are Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo. A small segment of Alameda County also is in the Conservancy's service area.

Governance

The Conservancy is governed by a 23-member Board, including 11 voting members, 2 non-voting members, and 10 liaison advisors (Public Resources Code Section 32330 et seq.) The Board's chair is selected from the Delta Counties representative (Public Resources Code Section 32332). Board composition is:

Voting Members. The voting members are:

- Secretary for Natural Resources Agency or designee
- Director of Finance or designee
- Member or designee appointed by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the Solano County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors
- Two public members appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Senate
- One public member appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules
- One public member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly

Public Resources Code Section 32330(a)(1-10)

County Boards of Supervisors may appoint alternates to the board. *Public Resources Code Section 32330(h)*

Ex-Officio (non-voting) Members. The non-voting members are:

- A member of the Senate, appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules
- A member of the Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly

Public Resources Code Section 32330(b)

Liaison Advisors. The liaison advisors are:

- One representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- One representative from the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service
- One representative of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- One representative of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- A designee of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- A designee of the State Coastal Conservancy
- A designee of the Suisun Resource Conservation District
- A designee of the Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- A designee of the Delta Protection Commission
- A designee of the Yolo Basin Foundation

Section 32330(c)(1-10)

Program Description

The law creating the SSJDC outlines its mission, which ~~are~~ is broadly characterized as ~~the~~ co-equal responsibilities of ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability in the Delta. All the Conservancy activities are based on the principles of collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties (Public Resources Code Section 32320). The SSJDC shall:

- Act as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta; and
- Support efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents.

Program Areas

The statute creating the SSJDC provides for 12 specific program objectives:

- Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration.
- Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes.
- Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Delta.
- Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.

Things the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy May Do.

- Receive or award grants and other funding;
- Develop projects and programs designed to further its purpose;
- Allocate funds to a separate program within the Conservancy for economic sustainability in the Delta;
- Collaborate, cooperate, and coordinate with interested parties to further the Conservancy's mission;
- Enter into agreements and contracts with willing participants;
- Provide technical information, expertise, program and project development and other non-financial assistance.

(See Appendix A for more detail regarding the Conservancy's statutory mandate and authority.)

- Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.
- Protect and improve water quality.
- Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the conservancy's program.
- Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.
- Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.
- Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans (NCCPs).
- Facilitate take protection and safe harbor agreements under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq.), the California Endangered Species Act Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 2050) of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code, and the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act (Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 2800) of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code) for adjacent landowners and local public agencies.
- Promote environmental education through grant funding.

Strategic Plan Process

This draft interim strategic plan is a working document, and guides programs, activities, and projects necessary to achieve these program objectives listed above. There is at least one more meeting of the Strategic Plan Subcommittee to work on this document, and others are likely to be scheduled. The Conservancy welcomes stakeholder comments and ideas as work on this document continues.

Key Issues and Decisions

The Strategic Plan Subcommittee, at its December 2, 2010, meeting, listed some of the key issues facing the Conservancy. These issues interweave and interconnect through the Conservancy's program goals and will be addressed more fully in future versions of the interim and final strategic plans. Two key issues are Conservancy landownership and the effects of state climate change and sea level rise policies on the Conservancy's programs.

Landownership. The Delta Conservancy is approaching a critical junction in determining its role as a potential landowner in the Delta. The statute allows the Conservancy to own and manage land or conservation easements either by itself or in partnership with

others (Public Resources Code Section 32366); the Conservancy may also contract out its land management prerogatives (Public Resources Code Section 32368). The Conservancy does not have the power of eminent domain (Public Resources Section 32370).

It is important that as the Conservancy develops and clearly articulate its role and principles regarding Delta landownership and management, and, that its land management policies or criteria are consistent with the multiple responsibilities for economic development, recreation and public access, and ecosystem protection and enhancement. Identifying the best management practices associated with land ownership and management will be a key step for shaping its grant-making and partnership strategies, whether the Conservancy ultimately opts to be a landowner, or not. Other necessary steps regarding Conservancy landownership include (1) developing a process and criteria by which the Conservancy may accept land from a donor, including early outreach to neighboring landowners, and (2) assessing and securing the start-up and long-term maintenance and liability costs.

Conservancy staff is developing a separate white paper regarding landownership options which will be completed for the January 6, 2010, subcommittee meeting.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise. The Ocean Protection Council (OPC), on November 29, 2010, released their draft resolution about sea level rise. In its resolution, the OPC advises state agencies to use the sea level rise (SLR) values presented in the December 2009 National Academies of Science proceedings (shown below) as a starting place to develop agency-and context-specific considerations of risk and adaptive capacity.

Table 1: Sea-Level Rise Projections using 2000 as the Baseline			
<u>Year</u>		<u>Average of Models</u>	<u>Range of Models</u>
<u>2030</u>		<u>7 in (18 cm)</u>	<u>5-8 in (13-21 cm)</u>
<u>2050</u>		<u>14 in (36 cm)</u>	<u>10-17 in (26-43 cm)</u>
<u>2070</u>	<u>Low (B1 Emission Scenario)</u>	<u>23 in (59 cm)</u>	<u>17-27 in (43-70 cm)</u>
	<u>Medium (A2 Emission Scenario)</u>	<u>24 in (62 cm)</u>	<u>18-29 in (46-74 cm)</u>
	<u>High (A1FI Emission Scenario)</u>	<u>27 in (69 cm)</u>	<u>20-32 in (51-81 cm)</u>

2100	Low (B1 Emission Scenario)	40 in (101 cm)	31-50 in (79-128 cm)
	Medium (A2 Emission Scenario)	47 in (121 cm)	37-60 in (95-152 cm)
	High (A1FI Emission Scenario)	55 in (140 cm)	43-69 in (110-176cm)

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Another significant issue is the effect on the Conservancy's program of state policies regarding climate change and sea level rise. Under Executive Order S-13-08 (November 14, 2008), the California Natural Resources Agency was charged with developing a state Climate Adaptation Strategy; this strategy was completed in 2009. The Adaptation Strategy lists its guiding principles, and developed both near- and long-term strategies for seven areas: public health, biodiversity and habitat, ocean and coastal resources, water management, agriculture, forestry, and transportation and energy infrastructure. Among its key recommendations are:

- Carefully consider new development within areas vulnerable to inundation and erosion; however, vulnerable shoreline areas containing existing development that have regionally significant economic, cultural, or social value may have to be protected, and in-fill development in these areas may be accommodated.
- All state agencies responsible for management of habitat subject to climate change should prepare, as appropriate, agency-specific adaptation plans, guidance, or criteria.
- Using existing research, the state should identify key California land and aquatic habitats that could change significantly during this century due to climate change. Based on this identification, the state should develop a plan for expanding existing protected areas or altering land and water management practices to minimize adverse effects from climate change induced phenomena.

Some of the climate adaptation strategies listed in the 2009 report can easily be adopted by the Conservancy for its strategic plan.

[Include as a lead-in to a final paragraph here that would allude to growing scientific consensus that sea level rise is likely to be higher than previously forecast. And perhaps allude to the Delta as being particularly vulnerable to sea level rise because of its extensive levee system? And perhaps include that close attention to evolving evidence on sea level rise will be important for the Conservancy, if only to avoid investment strategies that will be negated by sea level rise. Examples that may or may not be wise to include: investing in shallow habitat may prove unwise in areas where the accretion of sediment needed to keep it shallow is unlikely to occur; investment in terrestrial habitats or farmland preservation would be unwarranted without consideration of the specific costs associated with levee raising and strengthening needed to avoid flooding in those areas.]

Other Key Questions. Other key questions for the on-going strategic planning process, which are important but not ones that can be resolved at this time, include:

- Define restoration, enhancement, and protection goals?
- Determine relationship with the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)
- Determine if the Conservancy should have a role in the Delta Stewardship Council's appellate review process
- Define Conservancy's role as forum for resolution of BDCP problems between HCPs, NCCPs, etc.
- Determine Conservancy's role as convener and facilitator between various stakeholders and plans
- Define areas of overlap and differences between the Conservancy and the Delta Protection Commission

Conservancy staff added two additional items, both listed in the enabling legislation:

- Define the steps to establish a grant program and establish appropriate criteria
- Begin identifying priority projects

Decision-Making and Monitoring

The Conservancy uses the best available information and science in its decision-making and is committed to building collaborative and trusting relationships with local governments and interested parties. The SSJDC will build upon existing validated data and information and identify where key gaps or weaknesses may exist in order to further the Conservancy's mission and vision. The Conservancy also is ~~committee-committed~~ to conducting its information gathering and sharing in a collaborative and open manner.

A future role for the Conservancy may include research and monitoring activities on projects and programs that support its mission, even ~~if~~ those not initiated by the Conservancy, if project originators are willing to partner with the Conservancy for those services. The information gathered as part of the research and monitoring activities would be an integral part of the adaptive management and decision-making process for policy-makers and project originators alike.

Agency Funding Sources

The Conservancy's base budget for basic operational needs consists of funding from the State General Fund. Currently, the Conservancy is investigating additional funding sources to develop and carry out its programs and partnerships.

Predominate among the long-term options for additional Conservancy funding is the Safe, Clean, Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010 (SBX7-2), which was deferred to the 2012 election. In it's current form, if ~~H~~ passed, this Act would authorize \$11.1 billion in general obligation bonds to finance a safe drinking water and water supply reliability program. The Conservancy anticipates receiving \$2.25 billion of those bond funds to carry out its ecosystem and economic programs in the Delta. ~~Between now and the 2012 election, the current bond language may be rewritten. The Conservancy will be actively monitoring any proposed changes in the bond language.~~

The Conservancy may pursue and accept funds from various sources, including, but not limited to, federal, state, and local funds or grants, gifts, donations, bequests, devises, subventions, grants, rents, royalties, or other assistance from funds from public and private sources. The Conservancy may also accept fees levied by others, or create and manage endowments (Public Resources Code Section 32372). The Conservancy is pursuing several of those options currently.

[In Strategic Plan Subcommittee meeting, the concept of beneficiary pays came up. How does the subcommittee want to address that issue, here or elsewhere in the document?]

Conservancy Guiding Principles

This section lists the core values and philosophies describing how the Conservancy conducts itself in pursuing its mission. These include:

Our Key Objectives

- To build trust between Delta residents and interested parties as the Conservancy develops programs to meet its co-equal responsibilities of ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability for its service area.
- To foster and encourage partnerships with Delta residents and other interested parties to mutually increase our respective abilities to achieve the Conservancy's mission and goals.
- To establish a culture of working together towards cooperative solutions and valuing the diversity of all communities that care about the Delta.
- To maintain neutrality so all interested parties are provided an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the Conservancy's activities.
- To build upon existing local government and regional efforts (including state and federal programs) to make progress on achieving the Conservancy's mission.
- To inform and educate the public throughout the region and the state about the important contributions the Delta provides to all Californians, including providing some water to two-thirds of the state, access to recreation and tourism, and the production of a variety of important agricultural products.

Implementing Our Programs

- To establish program priorities as a primary ecosystem restoration agent which consider the concerns of local, regional, and state stakeholders, through program and organizational flexibility.
- To strive to identify and implement activities that result in integrated environmental, economic, and social benefits rather than “either/or” outcomes.
- To maximize the public resource benefits and cost-effectiveness of our programs by securing services from both the private and public sector, and by using market-based approaches to generate revenues which are reinvested in our programs, where appropriate.
- To use the best available information and science in making decisions, identifying opportunities, and initiating and building upon Conservancy programs and projects.

How We Operate

- We are committed to innovation and to adapting to new information and situations.
- We are committed to seeking knowledge from others and to sharing what we have learned through our educational and communication activities.
- We are committed to attracting, developing and sustaining a competent, creative, and productive workforce to help the Conservancy meet its co-equal responsibilities.
- We are committed to being professional, courteous, responsive, ethical, and helpful in our dealings with each other and with people outside the Conservancy.
- We are committed to conducting operations openly. Decision making will be transparent, and we strive to improve communications throughout the region.
- We are committed to developing program priorities that consider the input received through community outreach efforts and seek to meet community needs, recognizing local and regional differences, through program and organizational flexibility.

Agency Assessment

The SSJDC came into existence on February 3, 2010. As a new organization, the Conservancy needs to create strategies and actions that recognize the many factors that support or create barriers to achieving its co-equal responsibilities. As the draft interim strategic plan is revised, more formal tools such as SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis, can be used to identify external and internal conditions that could impact the Conservancy's ability to fulfill its mission. In this context, external conditions are things over which the Conservancy has input, but little control, such as state regulations, other programs, or the budget process. Internal conditions are things over which the Conservancy has input and control, such as how to spend the money, staffing, program priorities, etc.

The following assessment summarizes existing information from several sources. The Conservancy anticipates refining this section through public forums.

External Assessments

The Delta covers only about 1 percent of the state's area, yet its size belies its contribution to the state and nation, as it provides a set of environmental and economic services whose benefits extend well beyond its borders. Those services include:

- Land uses (agricultural, urban, and conservation)
- Flood management
- Ecosystem services
- Water supply
- Water quality management and discharges
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Recreation and Tourism
- Local and state economies

As a dynamic system, the area's complexity presents data gaps and uncertainties even in light of increasing knowledge about the Delta. The services the Delta provides are interrelated, and there are conflicts within the system, especially between the ecosystem and water supply. All of the area's services depend on the levee system.

Listed below are some key points about the Delta:

- The predominant land uses in the Delta is agriculture and in the Suisun Marsh it is wetland conservation.
- Urban growth is limited by provisions in the Delta Protection Act and the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act, and the Delta is surrounded by some of the fastest growing areas in California.
- The Delta has about 500,000 acres of highly productive farmland, and about 40,000 acres of land use conversion from agriculture to urban and conservation occurred between 1990 and 2004.
- All Delta services rely on the levee system, yet the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently decided not to determine a base flood elevation, which impacts local governments and residents' ability to make land use decisions.
- Levees, most of which are locally built and maintained, are subject to failure from several sources.
- More than 10 percent of California's remaining wetlands are in the Suisun Marsh, which is an important wintering and nesting area for waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway.
- The Delta is considered among the most at-risk ecosystems in the United States.
- About 2/3 of Californians get some portion of their drinking water from the Delta; 87 percent of the municipal water used in the East Bay Area is either diverted or transported across the Delta; and almost 2.5 million acres of agricultural land outside of the Delta are irrigated with exported water.
- Water quality in the Delta can be negatively affected by upstream discharges, in-Delta discharges, [water exported from the Delta](#), and seawater intrusion. The Delta is managed to control salinity.
- In addition to being a water supply hub, the Delta is a transportation hub intersected by highways, shipping channels, [airways](#), and rail lines. The Sacramento and Stockton ports are key to goods movement in the state.
- The Delta is also intersected by a variety of utilities such as electrical transmission lines, natural gas pipelines, petroleum pipelines, water pipelines that serve Californians throughout the state.
- Recreation and tourism in the Delta currently is mostly water-based, primarily in the forms of fishing and boating. Other activities include waterfowl and upland game bird hunting, wildlife viewing, bird watching, and photography. Recreational opportunities will expand with the completion of the Great California Delta Trails initiative; eco-tourism and agri-tourism also will increase tourism opportunities in the Delta.

- The Delta is home to more than 500,000 people and 250,000 jobs, and contributes more than \$35 billion to the state’s economy. Infrastructure replacement costs in potentially flooded areas could reach \$40 billion or more.

External Challenges. A great deal of political and public attention has been focused on the Delta over the years. The recent round of this attention led to the creation of the Conservancy.

The scale, scope, and complexity of resources, funding, and institutional needs exceed the current capacity of existing programs in the both public and private sector. This presents many challenges to Delta residents, interested parties, and the state as they try to address the natural resources and community needs. The following is a list of the institutional and resource challenges facing the Conservancy and its service area:

Institutional Challenges	Resource Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 . Lack of funding 2 . Need to determine priorities based on existing staff levels 3 . Conflicting objectives and time-lines regarding Delta efforts 4 . Conveying clear identity and role of Delta Conservancy 5 . Few Californians understand the significance of the Delta 6 . As a result of current economy, hiring freezes and state-imposed cost saving measures that impact program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 . Increased urbanization affecting the Conservancy’s service area 2 . Increased demand on existing water supplies 3 . Maintaining Delta economy in light of changing state and national policies 4 . Impaired water quality 5 . Adverse effects on land and water species and their habitat, many of which already face declining health and numbers 6 . Significant risk in the Delta from floods and potential earthquakes 7 . Potential loss of historical and cultural character of communities 8 . Adverse impacts of climate change <u>and sea level rise</u> on natural resources, watersheds, and local economies in the Delta.

Consistency With Other Delta Planning Efforts. The Conservancy's strategic plan must be consistent with at least five other plans (Public Resources Code Sec. 32376). To ensure the success of the Conservancy's programs, it is likely that the strategic plan also will be consistent with the general plans and habitat conservation plans of the Delta counties as well as other documents, such as the Delta Protection Commission's economic sustainability plan. Funds provided to the Conservancy to implement ecosystem restoration projects pursuant to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan shall only be used for ecosystem restoration purposes (Public Resources Code Sec. 32360(3)). Meeting these statutory requirements will require a large amount of collaboration and coordination.

The Conservancy will partner with other agencies or be the primary agency carrying out several of the ecosystem restoration or economic sustainability activities proposed under these various plans. Currently, the Conservancy is observing and tracking the development of these various plans, with minimal participation in the policy making elements; as the draft interim strategic plan takes shape, this decision may be revisited.

The five plans with which the Conservancy's draft interim strategic plan must be consistent are:

- Delta Plan, by the Delta Stewardship Council, due January 1, 2012;
- Land Use and Resource Management Plan, by the Delta Protection Commission, updated 2010;
- Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, by the California Department of Water Resources, due by January 1, 2012;
- Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977; and
- Habitat Management, Preservation and Restoration Plan for the Suisun Marsh (Suisun Marsh Plan), by the Suisun Charter Group. The public review draft was released in November 2010.

The Conservancy's staff is completing an initial inventory of proposed actions under these plans, if available, and will analyze how those proposed actions could fit within the Conservancy's draft interim strategic plan.

Internal Assessment

The SSJDC is mandated to serve a broad range of purposes. To develop effective programs and set priorities, the Conservancy must actively engage with the local governments, Delta residents, state and federal governments, and interested parties to develop partnerships and outreach. Communication with stakeholders is critical for the success of the Conservancy, its mission, and its draft interim strategic plan.

At this nascent stage, the Conservancy is determining where its niche lay, keeping in

mind the principles of building trust and building upon existing efforts to achieve its co-equal responsibilities.

Large area. The Conservancy’s service area includes approximately 1,300 square miles and more than 1,000 miles of levees and waterways in parts of six counties. Headquarters for the Conservancy must be in the legal Delta (as defined in Water Code Section 12220). This creates transportation, communication, and operational challenges. An effective organizational response will require strategic use of the Conservancy’s resources and a commitment to on-going communication with the public and all partners.

Complex Institutional Setting. The SSJDC operates in a complex institutional setting. The Board includes 2 representatives from the Executive Branch (the Natural Resources Secretary and the Department of Finance Director), 2 representatives from the Legislature (non-voting members, one each from the Senate and Assembly), 5 local government representatives (one each from the five Delta Counties), and 4 general public members (2 gubernatorial appointees, and one each from the Senate and Assembly). In addition to the voting and non-voting members, the Board also has 10 liaison advisors from federal, state, and local agencies. (See Governance Section for more detail.)

There are more than 200 entities with some jurisdiction in the Delta, including special districts.

Program Diversity. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act lists 12 program areas for which the Conservancy is responsible. The complexity involved in developing programs for these 12 areas is matched by the complexity of the Delta system itself. Whatever else the Delta may be, it is not a place where a “one size fits all” approach will work.

As the Delta region experiences change – as all regions within California are – it is important for the Conservancy to maintain as much flexibility in its approach as possible. The Conservancy believes that developing partnerships is a good way of maintaining that flexibility while still dealing with its program diversity.

One way the Conservancy sees its partnership role is in receiving and providing grants to other agencies. Should the Water Bond be enacted in 2012, the Conservancy will have millions of dollars to distribute through a grants program. Should the Water Bond not be enacted, the Conservancy still is planning to form partnerships to pursue federal government and private grant funding.

Emphasizing Collaboration and Cooperation. The Conservancy is committed to working collaboratively and cooperatively with ~~the~~ Delta residents, all levels of government, and a variety of partners, including non-governmental organizations and private landowners. The SSJDC will consult with city or county governments where grant money will be spent and ~~to~~ coordinate with appropriate state agencies (Public Resources Code

Section 32363).

Partnerships. Integral to the success of the Conservancy will be its partnerships with local, state, federal, and non-governmental entities. Some partnerships are mentioned in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act, such as with the 10 liaison member agencies and the Delta Stewardship Council. Other partnerships will evolve over time as the Conservancy refines its role and identifies project priorities and opportunities.

Conservancy's Three Year Organizational Strategic Goals

During the next three years, the SSJDC will work to build an effective infrastructure to carry out its mission, to develop strategies, and to set priorities for decision making on projects and site-specific activities. To carry out its mission, the Conservancy will focus on key organizational areas:

- Create an effective organization
- Implement a balanced program
- Identify funding needs and sources
- Increase knowledge and capacity
- Use and share best available information

Organizational Goal I: Create an effective organization

Less than a year old, the Conservancy is defining its key purposes, functions, and project goals and developing an organizational structure to support those. It hired staff; adopted rules, administrative regulations, and guidelines for Conservancy operations; and designed organizational management structure. It is in the process of establishing a permanent headquarters site.

The Conservancy's organization structure emphasizes teamwork and flexibility. It addresses the challenges of serving a large and diverse area and is committed to forming partnership with other governmental agencies and interested parties.

The Conservancy does not supersede local or regional efforts; instead, its efforts are to emphasize community interaction and build upon and enhance existing infrastructure.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal I

Strategy 1.1: Ensure an open and transparent decision-making process by adopting understandable rules, guidelines, and procedures for the Conservancy's business.

Strategy 1.2: Conduct a robust public outreach and feedback program within the region and in the state's metropolitan areas important to the success of the Conservancy's programs.

Strategy 1.3: Ensure an active role, participating as a key partner in the development and implementation of the Delta Plan and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan.

Organizational Goal 2: Implement a balanced program

The SSJDC places a priority on projects and activities that provide multiple benefits consistent with program goals. The integration of environmental, economic, and social aspects is encouraged and supported.

The Conservancy will make every effort ~~to~~, over time, to allocate resources and activities equitably across the Conservancy's service area. Even so, in the initial years of operations, the diversity, complexity, and uniqueness of the Delta may create challenges in achieving this objective. Funding limitations and restrictions may also present challenges in achieving this objective. Compounding that challenge will be a desire to invest in projects that also provide statewide benefits.

The Conservancy will continue to identify efforts and activities with Delta-wide applications and benefit. This may include communication efforts that include information collection and dissemination.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal 2

Strategy 2.1: Recognize the need to act based on opportunity, available funding, and regional differences and statewide interest.

Strategy 2.2: Continuously refine regional and Delta-wide priority setting processes, consistent with the statute, to guide staff and the Board in decision-making.

Organizational Goal 3: Identify funding needs and sources

Adequate and stable funding sources are essential to fully implement this draft interim strategic plan. The SSJDC understands that funding from any one source may be limited, inconsistent, and restricted in use; governmental funding is contingent upon appropriation and authority to spend granted by either the Legislature or Congress. The Conservancy is dedicated to securing adequate and stable funding from a variety of sources—including grants, endowments, or fees—to carry out its co-equal responsibilities. Priorities established later in this draft interim strategic plan will guide how available funds will be used.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal 3

Strategy 3.1: Develop and communicate funding needs to the public, partners, and decision makers at all levels.

Strategy 3.2: Leverage and improve funding options and opportunities by identifying and communicating potential funding sources to those engaged in project activities consistent with the Conservancy's mission.

Strategy 3.3: Identify and secure additional opportunities for stable funding sources for the Conservancy.

Organizational Goal 4: Increase knowledge and capacity

The Delta communities have a rich history of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. Many local activities, consistent with the Conservancy's mission, are underway. The Conservancy will build upon these efforts and assist communities in building and creating their capacity to complete their efforts by providing information, technical assistance, financial, or other resources.

The Conservancy recognizes that its goals and activities must be flexible to address the wide variety of regional issues and concerns, and to adapt to new information or situations. Education efforts, demonstration projects, and research and monitoring activities designed to increase knowledge will continue to be encouraged and supported.

Strategies to Support Organization Goal 4

Strategy 4.1: Determine existing and potential regional and community education, shared learning, and research projects that the Conservancy can support and enhance.

Strategy 4.2: Assist Delta communities in identifying demonstration projects and communication needs (e.g., grant opportunities) and develop partnerships to address those needs and resolve issues.

Strategy 4.3: Assist, in an advisory capacity, Delta communities on achieving, obtaining necessary information, or resolving conflicts for their habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans.

Organizational Goal 5: Use and share best available information

The SSJDC will base its decisions on the best available information by engaging compiling, synthesizing, analyzing, and sharing existing data.

Numerous governmental agencies, non-governmental entities, educational institutions, and individuals develop and maintain information that could inform the Conservancy's decision making. In many instances, this information is not readily available to others. The Conservancy will collaborate with these entities to determine information needs and define ways to make the best available information easily available to interested parties.

The Conservancy will identify and incorporate as much existing data as possible into its information collection and dissemination efforts. The Conservancy also proposes to engage community leaders and others in defining information priorities, data gaps, and dissemination methods.

To promote the Delta and ~~and~~ the Conservancy's programs, the Conservancy will make information as widely available as possible, using multiple avenues ranging from personal contact to Internet features to other emerging technologies.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal 5

Strategy 5.1: Identify sources of existing information relevant to the Conservancy's mission.

Strategy 5.2: Assess and share with partners information to promote decision-making that is consistent with the Conservancy's mission.

Conservancy's Three Year Program Goals

[Staff is provided ~~ding~~ outlines for two ways of approaching program goals. Option 1 groups the items in Public Resources Code Section 32322 under four overarching goals. Option 2 lists as individual goals the items found in Section 32322. These options appeared in the December 2 version of the draft interim strategic plan and are not reproduced in the December 15 version in order to conserve space. Option I had four goals, grouping the 12 items in the statute. Option II listed each of the 12 items separately, and only focused on a goal statement and strategies. Option III, below, expands on Option II to include background, challenges, objectives, and performance measures.]

NOTE: The text in this section is provided as an example of what the final interim strategic plan could include. Staff anticipates that the subcommittee will rewrite large portions of this section and offers this text as a method of starting the conversation.

Option III:

Program Goal 1: Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration

Background. In addition to private interests, there are more than 200 local (including special districts), state, and federal agencies with some sort of jurisdiction in the Delta. Many of these regulate or control land use, water use, or other ecosystem resources. Because there are so many entities with similar goals and existing programs of implementing ecosystem restoration in the Delta, there is potential overlap and duplication of efforts; at times, individual agencies' objectives may be in conflict with each other. Issues of community identity, property and water rights, water quality, and flood control (levees) are additional factors that influence decisions regarding ecosystem restoration. As a new entity in an already crowded arena, the Delta Conservancy does not supersede local or regional efforts, and is committed to forming partnerships with other governmental agencies and interested parties to carry out ecosystem restoration in the Delta. Given the amount of interest in Delta ecosystem restoration, the Delta Conservancy is in a unique position to encourage and increase collaboration and cooperation between the various public and private entities to achieve a full range of program objectives. [An option is to write a Problem Statement rather than a Background section, to indicate what problem the Conservancy is addressing with its goals, objectives, and strategies.]

Challenges:

- How the Delta is viewed differs by each stakeholder; some focus on a more localized level (e.g., geographic, hydrologic), while others have a regional view. This

Delta-view informs, supports, or may oppose an overarching Delta ecosystem restoration effort.

- Establishing the Delta Conservancy's identify and role outside of other existing state agencies.
- Outside of Delta residents, few Californians are aware of the importance of Delta ecosystem health and their everyday lives; some see Delta ecosystem restoration efforts as a "people versus fish" situation.
- Identifying existing jurisdiction efforts and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Increased collaboration and cooperation between the various entities will require integrating data from various programs.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amount of Conservancy activities.
- Ecosystem restoration is a long-term endeavor that can be complex, expensive, time dependent (seasonality), and time consuming.
- Promoting and proving that ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability in the Delta (primarily agriculture and working landscapes) can be harmonious.

Objectives:

1. Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration.
2. Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans (NCCPs).
3. Facilitate take protections and safe harbor agreements for adjacent landowners and local public agencies.
4. Identify and secure adequate funding to carry out ecosystem restoration in the Delta.
5. Develop principles and strategies for landownership and management that includes planning for effects of climate change and sea level rise.

Strategies:

1. Identify and establish partnerships with other agencies that have existing efforts underway in which the Conservancy can provide assistance.
2. Establish partnerships to work with local entities to address their needs regarding implementing HCPs and NCCPs.
3. Establish a forum, process, or educational opportunities to facilitate take protections and safe harbor agreements for landowners adjacent to ecosystem restoration sites and for local public agencies.
4. Participate in Delta planning efforts as appropriate.

5. Identify projects from multiple entities that could be combined or modified to leverage resources.

Performance Measures:

- A listing of potential partnerships and the number of partnerships established, updated annual.
- A listing of Delta ecosystem restoration efforts by various local, state, and federal agencies
- A listing of how the Conservancy assisted local entities with their HCPs and NCCPs
- A listing of forums, processes, or educational opportunities used to facilitate take protections and safe harbor agreements
- A listing of projects that could be combined or revised to benefit from leveraging resources from multiple entities

Program Goal 2: Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes

Background: Agriculture is the dominant land use of the Delta, involving approximately 553,687 acres of actively farmed, fallowed and related lands, or more than 80 percent of the Delta's total land area (in 2004). **[add statement about Delta ag. contribution to state economy]** Delta agriculture has an uncertain future. Over the years, the agricultural cultivation of the Delta's peat soils contributed to the subsidence of most Delta islands. Subsidence increases the urgency for improvements of levees protecting the affected islands. Failure of levees protecting deeply subsided islands would not only damage or destroy agriculture and infrastructure on these islands, but also alter the salinity balance in the Delta, threatening water conveyance to agricultural and urban water users in California. Diminished flows, lower water quality, and potential land use change (urbanization) also threaten Delta agriculture. **[need statement about proposed ecosystem restoration efforts and impacts on agriculture to tie into our mandate.]** Recent proposals for an alternative conveyance system for moving fresh water through or around the Delta have also created great uncertainty for Delta agriculture. **[add statement about state climate policy findings and agriculture here.]**

Challenges:

- Developing trust and partnerships with the agricultural community and other Delta residents.

- Identifying existing jurisdictions and efforts and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.
- Promoting and proving that agricultural practices and working landscapes can be harmonious with ecosystem restoration.
- The profitability of activities such as carbon sequestration (carbon banking) is uncertain.
- Water quality and flow are uncertain, pending other policy decisions (e.g., SWRCB's Delta flows decision, the DSC's Delta Plan, etc.).
- The amount and impact of sea level rise on the Delta is uncertain.
- Regional diversity requires complementary activities and practices, but a “one size fits all” approach will not work.
- Levee stability, flooding, and vulnerability to other extreme climate events (e.g., drought) are uncertain.

Objectives:

- With stakeholder input develop and implement best management principles for agricultural working landscapes in anticipation that the Conservancy will own land. Those best management principles also could serve as a model for other willing landowners.
- Promote working landscapes with ecosystem services to improve agriculture and biodiversity in the Delta.
- Promote establishing a special Delta regional agricultural labeling program in partnership with other entities such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture.
- Work with local entities to develop wildlife friendly agriculture incentives.
- Support efforts to enhance agricultural tourism and value-added agricultural production as a means of maintaining the Delta agricultural economy.
- Promote innovations in agricultural enterprises in the Delta.
- Study and develop with stakeholders agricultural responses to changes in the climate and potential sea level rise.

Strategies:

1. Provide forums to develop best management principles with stakeholder participation.
2. Develop wildlife friendly agriculture demonstration projects in partnership

- with willing landowners in the Delta.
3. Develop partnerships with governmental (e.g., CDFA) and non-governmental (e.g., chambers of commerce) to promote and establish a special Delta regional agricultural labeling program.
 4. Work with CDFA and the Strategic Growth Council to develop and adopt sustainable agriculture policies for the Delta.
 5. Identify incentives for willing landowners to use the Conservancy's best management principles.
 6. Identify opportunities to support and partner with entities to promote agri-tourism, such as the Discover the Delta Foundation's Farmers Market.
 7. Develop collaboration partnerships with state and federal agencies to prioritize and expand technical and financial cost share programs to assist growers' adaptation to climate change or sea level rise.
 8. Explore concept of a good neighbor subventions-type program to mitigate damage to growers next to restored habitat.
 9. Work with DWR to purchase from willing sellers wetland easements on marginal, flood-prone agricultural land to diversify grower income, buffer productive lands from floods, and improve ecosystem services in the Delta.
 10. Form partnerships to provide outreach and technical assistance regarding agriculture and biodiversity to increase ecosystem services and agricultural diversity in the Delta.

Performance Measures:

1. Produce the Conservancy's best management principles for landownership and management.
2. Produce criteria for Conservancy participation in working landscapes demonstration projects.
3. Listing of the number and type of Conservancy participation in working landscapes demonstration projects.
4. Listing of number of partners and document Conservancy participation in Delta regional labeling program.
5. Establishing a working landscapes strategy team to develop a list of incentives for landowners to incorporate working landscapes and the Conservancy's best management principles
6. Listing of potential agri-tourism opportunities and partnerships in the Delta.
7. Listing of number of partners and documenting participation efforts to assist Delta growers in adapting to climate change or sea level rise.
8. Listing of number of partners and documenting participation in efforts to develop a sustainable agriculture policy for the Delta.

9. The number and types of outreach efforts regarding agriculture and biodiversity in the Delta.
10. A listing of potential wetland easements in the Delta.

Program Goal 3: Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation

Background: The Delta's proximity to the Bay Area, Stockton, and Sacramento region and its diversity of recreational settings and experiences makes it a popular recreation destination. Approximately 7 million people currently visit the Delta for recreation annually.¹ By 2020, visitation is forecasted to reach 8 million visitor days. The range of recreational opportunities in the Delta include fishing, hunting, boating, camping, picnicking, and nature viewing. Completion of the Delta Bike Trial will [add statement about Great Delta Trail here].

Recreation is an important part of the Delta economy. People coming to the Delta for recreation support the Delta economy through their expenditures for food, lodging, services, and supplies. Delta recreation also benefits the rest of California's economy. In addition to money spent inside the Delta, Delta boaters and anglers spend money outside the Delta in preparing for their trips. Overall recreation levels in the Delta are forecasted to increase over the next 10 to 20 years, but at a slower rate than regional or state population growth. [add information from state park plan here]

Challenges:

- Identifying existing jurisdiction, efforts, and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities
- Potential conflict between public access to recreational land or restored habitat and working landscapes (e.g., orchards, farms, ranches, etc.)
- Potential conflict between recreational uses of land and other uses such as floodplain management, levees maintenance, or sensitive wildlife habitat
- Potential environmental degradation from use, aging infrastructure (e.g., marinas), abandoned boats, foot traffic, vehicle traffic, etc.
- The effects of climate change or sea level rise is uncertain.

Objectives:

1. Work with local stakeholders and the California Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a list of potential recreational opportunities.
2. Assist in promoting the Delta as a recreational and tourist destination.
3. Support efforts to develop the Great California Delta Trail system.
4. Support multiple use of Delta agricultural lands, such as seasonal use for hunting

- and providing wildlife habitat that is accessible to the public.
5. Assist and support construction, maintenance, or supervision of needed recreational and tourist facilities in the Delta.
6. Assist protection of private lands from unauthorized use by recreationalists.
7. Promote public-private partnerships in developing recreational and tourist opportunities.

Strategies:

1. Partner with the California Department of Parks and Recreation and local entities to inventory current efforts and promote opportunities for collaboration
2. Identify ways of assisting public and private recreational facilities in modernizing infrastructure and promote their services
3. Identify, promote, and carry out programs that combine Delta-based recreation and Conservancy co-equal responsibilities with environmental education
4. Promote Delta recreation through Conservancy media (e.g., website, clearing-house)
5. Develop good neighbor policies and ways to assist private landowners from unauthorized use of their lands from Conservancy-owned or managed land.

Performance Measures:

- Number of partnerships formed to advance Delta recreation and tourism
- List of potential programs or projects that will assist public and private recreational facilities in modernizing infrastructure and promote services
- List of potential programs or projects that will combine Delta-based recreation and Conservancy co-equal responsibilities with environmental education
- Develop good neighbor policy

Program Goal 4: Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission

Background: There are numerous cultural features throughout the Delta that could become points of recreation attraction if described and interpreted adequately. [Add general statement here.] An example of this is the significant opportunity for cultural resource rehabilitation and interpretation/education at Locke with the Locke Boarding House project. [add statement about NHA here? Also state park plan?].

Challenges:

- Identifying existing jurisdiction, efforts, and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.

- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities
- Conflict between preserving or growing legacy communities (e.g., self-determination on growth) and other land uses such as agriculture (e.g., local right to farm ordinances), ecosystem restoration and habitat enhancement, or flood protection (e.g., levees)
- Effects of climate change or sea level rise is uncertain, but certain legacy communities such as Locke could be at risk from substantial (55 inches) sea level rise.

Objectives:

1. Support and assist the Delta Protection Commission in achieving a National Heritage Area designation for the Delta, if appropriate.
2. Develop partnerships with local cultural and historical groups to identify ways in which the Conservancy can assist in their efforts.
3. Work with the California Department of Parks and Recreation to develop identified areas.

Strategies:

1. Attend and participate in National Heritage Area workshops.
2. Identify local cultural and historic groups and inventory their goals and needs.
3. Identify and inventory existing efforts to promote legacy towns.

Performance Measures:

- Number and type of participation in National Heritage Area workshops or related events.
- List of cultural and historical entities in the Delta.
- Inventory of on-going efforts to promote legacy communities in the Delta for possible partnership with the Conservancy.

Program Goal 5: Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission

Background: The social-ecological services of the Delta, critical to the social-ecological health of California, are subject to a range of threats such as floods, toxic spills, or large fires. The principle catastrophic event facing the Delta is flooding from levee failures or intense storms. Flooding is the most common and damaging natural disaster in California and more than 90 percent of the Delta's land area is within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zones. There is a potential statewide economic impact from Delta flooding that is currently being addressed by several initiatives intended to strengthen the Delta's emergency response program. The need for regional emergency response planning and recovery is even more important as precipitation patterns change and sea level rises, as Delta islands' soils continue to subside, and as urban encroachment puts more people in harms way. The Delta Protec-

tion Commission (DPC) is facilitating planning for coordinated regional emergency response in the Delta. This effort includes the five county offices of emergency services, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and many other state and federal agencies.[update the last sentence, because CALEMA incorporated their report in its plan, I believe].

Challenges:

- Identifying existing jurisdiction, efforts, and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.
- The effects and amount of sea level rise is uncertain.
- Conflicting information regarding the risk to Delta levees from earthquakes.
- Water quality issues associated with disasters are sometimes overlooked or underplayed, e.g., the toxic mix from household cleansers or agricultural chemicals.

Objectives:

1. Work with the Delta Protection Commission, CalEMA and others to determine how best the Conservancy can assist in their efforts.
2. Use wetland or floodplain easements or projects consistent with Conservancy's ecosystem restoration goals that will also contribute to resiliency to natural disaster.
3. Explore efficacy of riparian ecosystem restoration options that would contribute to resiliency to natural disasters (e.g., setback levees, floating islands).
4. Partner in recovery assistance efforts as part of the Conservancy's commitment to co-equal responsibilities.
5. Develop the Conservancy's policy regarding effects of climate change and sea level rise as required by state climate change policy.

Strategies:

1. Meet with DPC, CalEMA , and others to determine what the Conservancy can contribute to building resiliency to natural disasters.
2. Identify and inventory wetland or floodplain easements or projects that would be consistent with Conservancy's ecosystem restoration goals.
3. Partner with Department of Water Resources and the Delta Science Program to study the efficacy of alternative ecosystem restoration options such as setback levees.
4. Identify and develop partnerships with appropriate entities to assist in disaster recovery efforts consistent with the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities and other goals.

Performance Measures:

- Complete and adopt Conservancy's climate change and sea level rise policy.
- Number and kinds of partnerships related to developing the Delta's resiliency to effects of natural disasters.
- Inventory of wetland and floodplain easement projects that contribute to natural disaster resiliency and Conservancy's co-responsibilities.
- Number and kinds of study partnerships to investigate alternative ecosystem restoration options.

Program Goal 6: Protect and improve water quality

Background: Water quality in the Delta is governed primarily by the 1995 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta (1995 Bay-Delta Plan). The quality of water reaching the Delta is also regulated by Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Boards), which identify water quality objectives and control programs for the discharges to surface and groundwater in their respective basins.

Key contributors to Delta water quality concerns include:

- Ocean-derived salts associated with daily tidal cycles
- Salinity, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals from treated urban wastewater discharges from upstream and in-Delta sources
- Pollutants and organics from upstream and in-Delta storm water runoff
- Temperature, pesticides, sediment and land-derived salts¹ from upstream agricultural runoff and drainage and organics from in-Delta agricultural drainage
- The magnitude of upstream inflow and reservoir releases, the rate of export pumping, and the operation of flow management structures, such as the temporary barriers in the southern Delta and the Delta Cross Channel

Challenges:

- Identifying existing jurisdictions, efforts and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.
- Sources of water quality issues are varied.
- Water quality needs for drinking water, environmental water, and agricultural water are different and at times in conflict.

Objectives:

1. Facilitate communication with water quality regulatory agencies and Delta residents.
2. Implement best management principles that promote appropriate agricultural and ecosystem water quality that can serve as a model.
3. Work with Delta residents and local entities to address multiple causes of water quality problems in the Delta, from abandoned vessels to urban runoff.
4. Develop criteria for Conservancy participation in water quality demonstration projects that are consistent with the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities.

Strategies:

1. Provide forum for water quality information.
2. Promote and model best management practices regarding water quality.
3. Assist Delta residents and local entities in communicating water quality messages.
4. Explore ways alternative ways of promoting solutions to Delta water quality issues, such as public-private ventures or an X-Prize style incentive.
5. Identify, support, or partner in demonstration projects that combine water quality with the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities.

Performance Measures:

- Develop a best management principle regarding water quality.
- Number of water quality forums in which the Conservancy participated.
- Number and kind of assistance to local entities regarding water quality.
- List of potential incentives regarding water quality.
- Number and kinds of demonstration projects identified, supported, or partnered in.

Program Goal 7: Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's programs

Background: The Delta economy includes a variety of persons who have economic relationships with the Delta. Some people work or do business in the Delta but live elsewhere, while others live in the Delta but work elsewhere. Many businesses have economic relationships with the Delta but are not located there, some businesses are located in the Delta but they do little business there. All of these people and businesses are part of the "Delta economy," but they are affected by policy actions in the Delta in profoundly different ways.

The wider state economy is influenced by a number of services provided by the Delta. These services include: highways, railroads and shipping routes, natural gas storage and transmission facilities, electric transmission pathways, and gasoline product distribution pipelines. All of these are important services for the state economy, and their loss would be costly. Important

production value is attributable to Delta agriculture, recreation, natural gas production and wastewater treatment.

Challenges:

1. How the Delta is viewed differs by each stakeholder; some focus on a more localized level (e.g., geographic, hydrologic), while others have a regional view. This Delta-view informs, supports, or may oppose an overarching Delta ecosystem restoration effort.
2. Establishing the Delta Conservancy identify and role outside of other existing state agencies.
3. Few Californians are aware of the importance of Delta ecosystem health and their everyday lives; some see Delta ecosystem restoration efforts as a “people versus fish” situation.
4. Increased collaboration and cooperation between the various entities will require integrating data from various programs.
5. Identifying existing jurisdictions, efforts, and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
6. Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.
7. Ecosystem restoration is a long-term endeavor that can be complex, expensive, time dependent (seasonality), and time consuming.
8. Promoting and proving that ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability in the Delta (primarily agriculture and working landscapes) can be harmonious.
9. Developing trust and partnerships with the agricultural community and other Delta residents.
10. The profitability of actions such as carbon sequestration (carbon banking) is uncertain.
11. Water quality and flow are uncertain, pending other policy decisions (e.g., SWRCB’s Delta flows decision, the DSC’s Delta Plan, etc.).
12. The amount and impact of sea level rise on the Delta is uncertain.
13. Regional diversity requires complementary activities and practices, but a “one size fits all” approach will not work.

Objectives:

1. Develop criteria by which future Conservancy assistance to the Delta economy will be given.
2. Implement actions consistent with the Conservancy’s mission that are developed through the Delta Protection Commissions economic sustainability plan.
3. Assist local and regional entities in communicating the Delta’s unique and significant importance in the state’s economy, both as a site of goods production and goods transportation (including utility corridors) .

Strategies:

1. Work with local and regional governments, chambers of commerce, farm bu-

reaus, and other stakeholders to develop criteria for future Conservancy economic assistance programs consistent with the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities.

2. Work with the Delta Protection Commission to develop ways of prioritizing and implementing actions listed in their economic sustainability plan.
3. Identify and inventory existing efforts regarding innovations and options for the Delta economy, consistent with the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities.
4. Investigate the potential for a Delta-based small business option for state contracts of a certain dollar amount that are carried out in the Delta region.

Performance Measures:

- Complete criteria for Conservancy participation in Delta economic projects.
- Complete implementation plan for actions consistent with Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities developed in the Delta Protection Commission's economic sustainability plan.
- Complete inventory of existing economic sustainability programs and entities .
- Complete a feasibility study regarding a Delta-based small business options for state contracts that are carried out in the Delta region.

Program Goal 8: Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed

Background: There are several major plans outlining projects that address either one or both of the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities (see Appendix C for a list of some of these plans). The Conservancy's strategic plan must be consistent with five reports: (1) the Delta Plan, (2) the Delta Protection Commission's Management Plan, (3) the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act, (4) the Suisun Marsh Plan, and (5) the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. The Conservancy will be responsible for carrying out several of the actions listed in these plans.

Challenges:

1. The Delta Plan and the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan are not yet written.
2. The Conservancy's statutory mandate is large, and there are a multitude of efforts – from state, local, federal, and by stakeholders – that addresses one or more of these mandates.
3. Increased collaboration and cooperation between the various entities will require integrating data from various programs.
4. Identifying existing efforts and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
5. Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.

6. The Conservancy has no defined role in the Delta Stewardship Council's appellate process.
7. Defining best available science.
8. Effects of climate change and sea level rise are uncertain.

Objectives:

1. Provide a neutral and fair forum for governmental and stakeholder entities to evaluate projects or other proposed actions that are consistent with the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities.
2. Develop criteria to assist the Conservancy and others in making decisions for the best use of available funding.

Strategies:

1. Develop the criteria by which the Conservancy Board will make prioritization decisions.
2. Through workshops, meetings, and various media, engage Delta residents in discussions regarding projects or proposed actions in a fair and neutral manner with governmental and other entities.
3. Develop a list of near-term actions, projects, or program with a list of funding sources and performance measures.
4. Develop a list of long-term actions, projects, or programs with a list of funding sources and performance measures.
5. Participate in the Delta Stewardship Council's appellate process, as appropriate.

Performance Measures:

- Complete and adopt criteria for deciding on Conservancy's priorities.
- Complete list of near-term actions, projects or programs.
- Complete list of long-term actions, projects, or programs.
- Number of forums sponsored, supported or attended that advance the Conservancy's objective of providing a neutral and fair forum to discuss potential Delta actions, projects, or programs.

Program Goal 9: Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources

Background: There are more than 200 local (including special districts), state, and federal agencies with some sort of jurisdiction in the Delta. Many of these regulate or control land use, water use, ecosystem resources, and economic development. Because there are so many entities with similar goals and existing programs in the Delta, there is potential overlap and duplication of efforts; at times, individual agencies' objectives are in conflict with each other. Issues of community identity, property and water rights, water quality, and flood control (levees) are additional

factors that influence decisions in the Delta. As a new entity in an already crowded arena, the Delta Conservancy does not supersede local or regional efforts, and is committed to forming partnerships with other governmental agencies and interested parties to carry out actions and programs to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources. Given the amount of interest in the Delta, the Conservancy is in a unique position to encourage and increase collaboration and cooperation between the various public and private entities to achieve a full range of objectives.

Challenges:

- How the Delta is viewed differs by each stakeholder; some focus on a more localized level (e.g., geographic, hydrologic), while others have a regional view. This Delta-view informs, supports, or may oppose an overarching Delta ecosystem restoration effort.
- Establishing the Delta Conservancy identity and role outside of other existing state agencies.
- Outside of Delta residents, few Californians are aware of the importance of Delta ecosystem health and their everyday lives.
- Increased collaboration and cooperation between the various entities will require integrating data from various programs.
- Identifying existing efforts and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.
- Ecosystem restoration is a long-term endeavor that can be complex, expensive, time dependent (seasonality), and time consuming.
- Promoting and proving that ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability in the Delta (primarily agriculture and working landscapes) can be harmonious.
- Developing trust and partnerships with the agricultural community and other Delta residents
- The profitability of actions such as carbon sequestration (carbon banking) is uncertain
- Water quality and flow are uncertain, pending other policy decisions (e.g., SWRCB's Delta flows decision, the DSC's Delta Plan, etc.)
- The amount and impact of sea level rise on the Delta is uncertain.
- Regional diversity requires complementary activities and practices, but a “one size fits all” approach will not work.

Objectives:

1. Develop criteria by which future Conservancy assistance to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources will be given.
2. Implement actions consistent with the Conservancy's mission to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.
3. Assist local and regional entities in communicating the Delta's unique and significant importance to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural,

cultural, historical, and living resources .

Strategies:

1. Work with local and regional governments and other stakeholders to develop criteria for future Conservancy endeavors to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.
2. Identify and inventory existing efforts regarding protection, conservation, and restoration of the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.

Performance Measures:

- Number and kinds of partnerships developed to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.
- Completed listing of existing efforts to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.

Program Goal 10: Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans (NCCPs)

Background: The five Delta counties have either completed or are working on their habitat conservation or natural community conservation plans. The process to receive state and federal permits to complete projects can be cumbersome, complex, and contradictory. In addition to local HCP/NCCPs, the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan is a state process that also will impact restoration efforts in the Delta. The Conservancy's role as a potential implementing agency of the BDCP is still under discussion; however, there could be potential to leverage and combine BDCP and local HCP/NCCP actions and projects for cost-savings and efficiency.

Challenges:

- Delta residents are skeptical and concerned that their views go unheard in the BDCP process.
- Areas for HCP/NCCP actions is a finite resource – there is only so much land in the Delta that is suitable for conservation actions so there could be increased competition for those lands, resulting in an artificial increase in land prices.
- Property used to achieve HCP/NCCP goals – whether developed by local governments or the BDCP – reduce income to county coffers from property taxes and associated production or income taxes and fees.
- Regional diversity requires complementary activities and practices, but a “one size fits all” approach will not work.

- Increased collaboration and cooperation between the various entities will require integrating data from various programs.
- Identifying existing jurisdictions, efforts, and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.

Objectives:

1. Provide a neutral and fair forum for governmental and stakeholder entities to evaluate projects or other proposed actions that are consistent with the Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities.
2. Develop criteria to assist the Conservancy and others in making decisions for the best use of available funding.
3. Participate in the BDCP consistent in a manner consistent with the Conservancy's principles and co-equal responsibilities.

Strategies:

1. Develop the criteria by which the Conservancy Board will make prioritization decisions.
2. Through workshops, meetings, and various media, engage Delta residents in discussions regarding projects or proposed actions in a fair and neutral manner with governmental and other entities.
3. Participate in BDCP review and meetings to advance the Conservancy's principles and co-equal responsibilities.

Performance Measures:

- Complete and adopt criteria for deciding on Conservancy's priorities.
- Number of forums sponsored, supported or attended that advance the Conservancy's objective of providing a neutral and fair forum to discuss potential Delta actions, projects, or programs.
- Number and type of participation in the BDCP process.

Program Goal II: Facilitate take protections and safe harbor agreements for adjacent landowners and local public agencies

Background: The process to receive take protections and safe harbor agreements involve multiple agencies and can be time consuming.

Challenges:

- Increased collaboration and cooperation between the various entities will require integrating and synthesizing information that meets all entities needs.
- Identifying and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.

Objective:

1. Provide a neutral and fair forum for permit streamlining that meets the needs of the governmental and stakeholder entities.

Strategies:

1. Convene a workgroup from the regulatory agencies to develop a permit streamlining process.

Performance Measures:

- Develop and staff a permit streamlining program

Program Goal 12: Promote environmental education

Background: Communication and education are key to the success of the Conservancy's programs.

Challenges:

- Outside of the Delta residents, few Californians are aware of the importance of Delta ecosystem health and their everyday lives.
- Establishing the Delta Conservancy identity and role outside of other existing state agencies
- Identifying existing jurisdictions, efforts, and analyzing potential areas for collaboration and cooperation—as well as potential areas of conflict—will be complex and time consuming.
- Staffing and funding in the near-term will limit the kinds and amounts of Conservancy activities.
- Promoting and proving that ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability in the Delta (primarily agriculture and working landscapes) can be harmonious.
- Regional diversity requires complementary activities and practices, but a “one size fits all” approach will not work.

Objectives:

1. Communicate clearly and honestly with the public about the Conservancy's programs and actions.
2. Partner with other entities to promote the Conservancy's vision, mission, and principles.

Strategies:

1. Develop a communications plan for the Conservancy.
2. Use various media effectively, including electronic media such as a webpage, Facebook, or Twitter.
3. Identify on-going efforts with which the Conservancy can partner.

Performance Measures:

- Redesign the Conservancy's webpage and update regularly.
- Number and types of partnerships developed and used.
- Number and types of communication products developed, including news coverage.

Next Steps

This draft interim strategic plan is meant to begin the conversation about the role of the Conservancy in the larger Delta context, and its strategies to achieve its co-equal responsibilities. Conservancy staff anticipates several versions of this draft interim plan before a final plan is adopted by the Board. Once the goals and strategies are determined, the next step is to identify and develop performance measures and criteria by which to judge the Conservancy's achievements.

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~~[Add thanks to the executive directors and staff from other conservancies who met with us to discuss their experiences in starting up conservancies.]~~

[Add thanks and photo credit.]

Glossary

Appendices:

Appendix A: full text of SBX 7-1

Appendix B: etc.

ⁱ Wade, W. and J. Plater, "Estimating Potential Demand for Freshwater Recreation Activities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers Delta: 1997-2020," Energy and Water Economics, 2002.